DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
AIR POUCH
REVIEWED BY [illegible] DATE 7/14/82
RDS ☐ or XDS ☐ EXT. DATE
TS AUTH. : REASON(S)
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐
DECLASSIFIED ☐ DELETE MARKINGS ☐
RELEASE DENIED ☐
PER FOI EXEMPTIONS

CONFIDENTIAL
(Security Classification)

DO NOT TYPE IN THIS SPACE
745H.00/7-2054

FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM: AMCONGEN, Lagos, Nigeria.

12
DESP. NO.

TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

July 20, 1954
DATE

1954 AUG 11 PM
MESSAGE CENTER
DC/R
Control
File

For Dept. Use Only	ACTION	DEPT.
	NEA-4	OCR-2 OLI-6 UNA-4 P-1 ECR-5 LEOPOLDVILLE
	REC'D 8/10 --	INFO OTHER: CIA-7 USIA-10 LONDON-1 ACCRA-1 DAKAR-1

SUBJECT: Review of Nigerian Political Developments in Recent Months.

There has been little of substance to report on the local political situation in recent months, and the period since the close of the resumed conference on the Nigerian Constitution (Congen's. desp. No. 109, of Feb. 14, 1954, and related communications) on February 1 has been the quietest the reporting officer has seen in almost two years in Lagos.

The budget session of the Central Legislature, which opened on March 6 and concluded on March 25, was a quiet one and adopted with a minimum of discussion the 1954-55 "caretaker" budget, which places estimated revenue at £50,287,400 and expenditures at £49,184,860, as well as the non-controversial bills, largely of a "tidying-up" nature, placed before it. (Congen's desp. No. 127, of March 18, 1954). The estimated budgetary surplus of £1,097,770 may well be increased by unusually high revenues from export duties on principal commodities which are on a sliding scale based on world market prices, if production and prices for these commodities are maintained about last season's levels.

From the strictly political standpoint, probably the chief item of interest was the absence of AWOLOWO, the Action Group (AG) Western Region leader, from the meeting. Mr. Awolowo devoted the period mainly to working on political fences at home in the Western Region, at the expense of reputation for national statesmanship in failing to participate in the work of the Central Legislature.

Awolowo and the Action Group, despite Awolowo's fence-mending in the West, suffered something of a set-back in the elections during this period to the Ibadan Native Authority Council, where the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) won 35 seats, against 5 by the Action Group and 3 by independents. Not too much significance should, however, be attributed to these results, as Ibadan, like Lagos, has a very substantial non-Yoruba population. Also, the NCNC, as the political "outs", were able to campaign on the everywhere popular appeals of tax reduction and reform.

Nevertheless,

EPKeeler:hgz
REPORTER

CONFIDENTIAL

ACTION COPY: DEPARTMENT OF STATE

The action office must return this permanent record copy to DC/R files with an endorsement of action taken.

This Document Must Be Returned To DC/R
745H.00/7-2054
CONFIDENTIAL
HO

Nevertheless, the results seem to have spurred Awolowo to greater efforts to cultivate the Western Region populace at both the grass-roots and the native ruler levels.

Since the conclusion of the meeting of the Central House, the other two principal political leaders, the Sardauna of Sokoto in the North and Dr. AZIKIWE in the East, have also spent virtually all of their time in their respective regions, and on regional matters, excepting, of course, Azikiwe's absence from the country on an economic mission for the Eastern Region, of about 2 months duration in the United States and Western Europe, between May 8 and July 11.

Awolowo has devoted considerable time to publicizing and otherwise laying the ground-work for the compulsory free primary education scheme for the Western Region, to be launched (to the extent that parents' cooperation in registrations, physical facilities and teachers make possible) next year. He has coupled this generally popular scheme with some frank statements that if the people want these and other amenities in the West they must be prepared to pay taxes for their support. However, he promised that there would be no increase in the Western Regional Government's capitation tax, which has given rise to several disturbances in out-lying towns during the past year. This does not, of course, prevent new taxes or increases from being levied by the local Native Authorities.

Also, the Action Group announced that it would support the Middle Belt People's Party, which currently has very little popular following, but which may well grow in an area which is not too closely wedded to the farther North and its conservative emirates. The Action Group would, of course, like to see a central group of states set up at the expense of the Northern Region. Little popular support has thus far been given to this scheme, however, and even less to abortive schemes for a separate Rivers area. In May, Awolowo paid a visit to the Cameroons, and reportedly succeeded in arriving at a loose alliance with ENDELEY's Kamerun National Congress (KNC) whereby the AG and KNC representatives in the new Federal Legislature which is to come into being under the constitutional revision "should work together for their people's benefits".

Virtually nothing has been heard publicly of the Action Group's "Lagos belongs to the West" issue, which created such a furor during the last half of 1953, and at the time of the reconvened conference on the Constitution in January. So far as the attitude of the Lagos populace is concerned, it seems fair to say that "they couldn't care less" about the issue. This does not mean, however, that Awolowo has forgotten it and

that it will

DECLASSIFIED

CONFIDENTIAL
(Classification)

that it will not be an issue again in 1956. Awolowo's tactics in recent months, including his non-appearance at the meeting of the Central House, all indicate that he is aiming toward self-government for the Western Region in 1956 and the reinclusion of Lagos in the West, with the threat of "secession" if it does not regain Lagos - all this to the seemingly complete disregard of the attitudes of the other Regions and the interests and orderly progress of the country as a whole.

In the Eastern Region, Dr. Azikiwe, as previously mentioned, has been absent from the country for about two months recently, and high-level political activity has correspondingly been limited there. Azikiwe is faced in the East with the serious problem of raising increased revenues, among a populace which is even less kindly disposed to taxes than is that of the Western Region and more limited in income and capacity to pay. There has been much "pussy-footing" on this subject by the NCNC leaders, but it appears that efforts are being made by them to pave the way for new tax measures when the Regional House again meets.

Activity of the NCNC in building up "alliances" in areas other than the East continued during Azikiwe's absence, with considerable surface success. An "alliance" is reported to have recently been formed between the Northern Elements Progress Union (NEPU - the principal minority party in the North) and the NCNC, and also the Middle Belt People's Party, despite the Action Groups earlier decision to support the latter party. Also, Chief H. O. DAVIES, of Lagos, and his Nigerian People's Congress (which at present seems to consist mainly of "H. O.") have currently thrown in their lot with Azikiwe. In addition, the NCNC is expected to support MBILE's Kamerun's Peoples Party in the Cameroons. However, in a country of Nigeria's stage of political development, where parties largely revolve about and are based on a few "big men", rather than basic principles and convictions, "alliances" are likely to be highly ephemeral.

The alliance with the NEPU in the North, through which, if it persists and is actually implemented, the NCNC may pick up a limited number of supporters among the Northern representation in the new Federal House, is not without its disadvantages. In addition to the malcontent nature of the NEPU, any close NCNC alliance with it will jeopardize the friendly relations which have prevailed between the Northern People's Party (NPC - the dominant party in the North), and the NCNC since the conference on the revision of the constitution. It may be added that some of the leading officials of the NEPU are opposed to the "alliance" with the NCNC, and it is questionable whether it will persist.

In summarizing the

CLASSIFIED

CONFIDENTIAL
(Classification)

In summarizing the foregoing, it appears clear, however, that the NCNC is, for the present at least, the nearest thing to a national political party that Nigeria has, while Azikiwe, by breadth of background and experience if not by following, is the closest to a statesman of national stature. In scope, the NCNC is helped (and possibly in the long run hindered, tribal jealousies and anti-Ibo feeling being what they are) by the fact that Ibo elements, in the civil service, railways, trading firms, etc., are found more widely scattered about the country than any other tribal group (except, perhaps, the omnipresent but politically-inert Hausa traders), and are certainly the keenest and most agressive, and when living among "strangers", the best organized (through the Ibo Union) of any group. While strategy for the forthcoming elections has been awaiting Azikiwe's return, it appears that the NCNC will campaign actively in all three regions, as well as Lagos and the Cameroons, either directly or through its "alliances", in the new elections. Its major attention, aside from its home territory of the Eastern Region, will, however, be concentrated on the Western Region and Lagos for practical reasons, the Muslim North's general antipathy to the Ibo being only too well known, as is the bitterness of Endeley's dominant KNC in the Cameroons toward Azikiwe.

While in the North all is placid on the surface, it seems clear that there is a growing body of younger people, some of them radicals and malcontents, and others of a genuinely progressive turn of mind, many of them Hausas, who are growing increasingly restive under the conservative Fulani rule and who, it is thought, will present an increasing challenge to the Sardauna of Sokoto and his Northern People's Congress (NPC). Here, the handful of British administrators are faced with the problem of trying to bring about sound progress in what are essentially semi-feudal emirates, to cut the ground from under the more radical element presently found in the NEPU, and primarily in such centers as Kano. This is a long and patience-trying process, and it is thought in some circles that the Sardauna is none too sturdy a leader for it.

In the administrative arm of the Government, much time has necessarily been devoted in recent months to plans for the re-allocation of functions, re-assignment of personnel, etc., as between the Central Government and the Regional Governments, which will be necessary when the revised Consitution comes into force. The major burdens of this task have, of course, fallen on the expatriate officers.

Most of the African Central Ministers have devoted a great deal of their time to travel about the country since the conclusion of the budget session of the House of Representatives.

In this travel,

DECLASSIFIED

CONFIDENTIAL
(Classification)

In this travel, in which the relatively new Eastern (NCNC) members - MBADIWE (Land and Natural Resources), MBU (Labor) and NJOKU (Commerce and Industries) - have been particularly active, "politicking" has played its part, but it has had its educational value in familiarizing these members of the Council with Regions other than their own and with the practical problems and accomplishments of the Government. Meanwhile, the practical operation and day to day work of the Ministries has gone on under the guidance and direction of the expatriate Permanent Secretaries. On these officers, happily, the Ministers generally lean heavily and (with occasional exceptions, particularly AKINTOLA of the Action Group) amenably, for experience and policy guidance.

Mbadiwe, the NCNC Central Minister of Land and Natural Resources, who has ambitions to be Azikiwe's alter ego and heir apparent, has gained himself much publicity by taking up the cudgels recently for slum clearance in Lagos. Whether he has helped this desirable objective and the long-standing plans for it remains to be seen. Having taken the slum-clearance program up as an NCNC minister, and while Lagos is still part of the Action Group Western Region, he has inevitably made the program a political issue, it being generally known that a good part of the most lucrative rent-producing slum property belongs to Action Group financial "angels", including Dr. MAJA. From the standpoint of getting the job started with a minimum of political opposition, it would doubtless have been better to have let the issue rest until Lagos has become Federal Territory under the revised Constitution. However, Mbadiwe is doubtless counting on gaining, on balance, NCNC votes in Lagos at the elections under the new Constitution by pressing the matter early.

It will be recalled that, in keeping with the federal set-up under the revised constitution, which will greatly increase the responsibilities of the Regional Governments, and pursuant to the recommendations of the Conference on the Nigerian Constitution in London last July-August, the Governor of Nigeria is to become a Governor-General and the Lieutenant-Governors of the Regions to become governors. It has recently been announced by the Secretary of State for Colonial Affairs that the Queen has approved the appointment of the present Governor of Nigeria, Sir John MACPHERSON, to be the first Governor-General of the Federation of Nigeria on the introduction of the revised constitution later this year. Sir Bryan SHARWOOD-SMITH and Sir Clement PLEASS, the present Lieutenant Governors of the Northern and Eastern Regions, respectively, are to become Governors of the same Regions. Sir Hugo MARSHALL, present Lieutenant Governor of the Western Region, is to become Chief Secretary of the Federation of Nigeria, succeeding Sir Arthur BENSON, who was appointed Governor of Northern Rhodesia several months ago. Sir John RANKINE, now British Resident at Zanzibar, will become Governor of the Western Region when the revised Constitution is introduced.

The Governor,

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL
(Classification)

The Governor, Sir John Macpherson, has been on leave in the United Kingdom since May, and is scheduled to return to Lagos early in August. During his absence, Sir Hugo Marshall has been administering the Government. Sir Hugo, whose service has been mostly in the Western Region, has made tours of the Northern and Eastern Regions while Acting Governor, which have familiarized him at first hand with these Regions, against the time when he takes up the Chief Secretary post.

The final drafting of the amending instruments to the Constitution of Nigeria, pursuant to the Conferences on the Constitution held in London in July-August 1953 and in Lagos in January-February 1954, has proceeded as rapidly as possible, but it is now apparent that the original target date for their submission to the Queen - the end of July - cannot be met. As was recognized by the Conference, this final drafting is a complex task, and in addition, much was left for the draftsmen to do in the field of transitory provisions and certain other subjects (e.g., the courts of justice, public service, finance, marketing boards, Southern Cameroons) in translating the decisions of the Conference into amending instruments. However, it is currently expected that the principal amending instruments will be completed for submission to the Queen in Council about the end of August, and that they will become effective October 1.

The present Central House of Representatives is scheduled to convene on August 13 for a supplementary budget session, which is expected to be brief - of perhaps a fortnights' duration. It is expected to deal primarily with financial and marketing board matters necessitated by the Constitutional revision, including provision of funds for new purposes envisaged in the revision. As the constitutional instruments which would give the Regions their new financial powers will not be ready by that time, it is also anticipated that the Central House will pass an ordinance giving at once to the Regions the same powers to appropriate funds which they will have under the amending instruments when the latter become effective.

After this budget session of the present Central House has ended, and when the Order in Council amending the Constitution comes into force, the House will be dissolved. New electoral regulations will have to be made, and elections held sometime thereafter. The present Council of Ministers will continue in office until the new Ministers can be appointed, after the new Federal Legislature has been elected and met.

No time table is yet possible for the transition period and considerable detail remains to be worked out, aside, of course, from the completion and approval of the amending instruments. Hence, the following outline is necessarily tentative.

It is expected

DECLASSIFIED

It is expected that the last session of the present Central House of Representatives (which should be concluded about the end of August) will be followed by supplementary budget sessions of the Regional Houses, as presently constituted and under the present Constitution, in September. Once the revised constitutional instruments come into force (probably October 1), it is thought that the first sessions, largely of an organizational nature, of the Regional Houses under the revised Constitution, may take place in October or November, at which time the new Regional Executive Councils may be organized and the Regional Premiers appointed by the Governors from among their membership. As will be recalled, the Premier of a Region is to be a person who is a leader of the party which commands a majority in its House of Assembly, and who is willing to accept appointment.

Regulations governing the elections of members to the new Federal Legislature under the revised Consitution, will be made by the Governor-General in Council, and to the Regional Houses of Assembly by the Governors in Council, and will be promulgated as soon as possible after the revised constitutional instruments coms into force. It is expected that the elections to the new Federal Legislature will take place about November- December, and that separate by-elections to the Regional Houses will be held about the same time or shortly thereafter.

The Regional Houses do not have to be reconstituted, as does the Federal Legislature, under the revised Constitution. As a practical matter, however, there will be vacancies to be filled, primarily the seats of present members of the Regional Houses who have chosen to stand for and have been elected to the Federal Legislature, rather than remaining in the Regional Houses. Under the revised Constitution, seats to the Federal Legislature are to be filled by separate elections, rather than by the present system of indirect election by and from among the membership of the Regional Houses, and no member of the Federal Legislature may also be a member of a Regional House. Although members of the Regional Houses may stand for election to the Federal Legislature without first resigning, they must resign from their Regional Houses if elected to the Federal Legislature.

The new Federal House of Representatives will probably meet for an initial session sometime between the date when the results of the elections are known and the date of the regular budget session in early March. This initial session, probably in January, would be held primarily to dispose of organizational matters, and to permit the appointment of the new Council of Ministers from among the membership of the new House.

It is to be expected that the relative peace and calm which has prevailed in Nigeria politics in recent months (after due

allowance

UNCLASSIFIED

allowance for the press sniping and libel suits which add zest to the life of the southern Nigerian politician and his followers) will come to an end when the campaigns for election to the new Federal Legislature and to vacancies in the Regional Houses get under way in a month or two.

Unless some near miracle occurs, it seems improbable (regional and tribal jealousies being what they are) that any of the present political parties in Nigeria can win enough seats outside its own Region to enable it to gain an overall majority of the 184 representative members of the Federal House. It will be recalled that these seats are to be allocated as follows - Northern Region 92; Western Region 42; Eastern Region 42; Southern Cameroons 6; and Lagos 2. The NPC in the North should, of course, come out with the largest number of seats of any party, despite internal differences and NEPU opposition, but the matter of it winning an overall majority of seats is quite another question. While it is futile to dwell on the possible outcome of the elections to the Federal Legislature at this stage, it seems likely that the ranking by number of seats will be NPC; NCNC and allies; and AG and allies. Along this line, there is some speculation that the NPC should count on, say, 80 seats, after allowing for losses to the NEPU, and internal dissention which recently lead to the resignation of the NPC Secretary General; the NCNC and its "allies" perhaps 60, although this would involve rather substantial inroads by the NCNC into the AG Western Region, particularly if the opposition National Independence Party (NIP) picks up a few seats in the East; and the Action Group and "allies" (including the KNC - who will be for the Cameroons first and the Action Group second) the balance. As previously indicated, however, such "alliances" are ephemeral, and the smaller parties may shift or reject them at any time.

The revised Constitution will require that the Governor-General appoint the new Federal Council of Ministers (3 from each Region and 1 from the Southern Cameroons) on the recommendation (a) of the person who appears to him to be the leader in the House of Representatives of the party having a majority over all the other parties, or (b) if there is no such party, then, with respect to the Ministers to be appointed from each Region, on the recommendation of the member from each Region who appears to be the leader in the House of the party which commands a majority of the representatives elected from the Region. In view of the absence of a party of truly national scope and following, and the unlikelihood that any of the existing parties can gain an over-all majority in the elections, the second alternative will presumably have to be followed. The only seeming political possibility, albeit a remote one, which would result in a party commanding an over-all majority and therefore able to form a government and accept responsibility on a national basis, as envisaged

CLASSIFIED

CONFIDENTIAL
(Classification)

envisaged in the first alternative, would be an NCNC-NPC merger. This would require that either Azikiwe or the Sardauna play second string, a role which neither would relish, unless, perhaps, it were the product of some sort of an off-stage deal whereby one would have the leadership of the coming Legislature, on the agreement that he would let the other have it in, say, 1956.

For the moment at least, it appears that about the best that can be hoped for is a continuation of the present reasonably amicable, if guarded, relationships between the NPC and the NCNC, which would be reflected in the Council of Ministers and in a loose coalition or working arrangement assuring a majority between the two in the new Federal House. All in all, it seems likely that the new Federal House and Council of Ministers will not be greatly different from the present, except for size and an indeterminate number of new faces, and that the difficulties of finding competent representation at the center which thinks in terms of Nigeria as a whole, rather than Regional and tribal affiliations, will continue.

In the latter connection, another important question to be answered is whether there is enough reasonably competent and experienced political talent in Nigeria to fill the seats in the Federal Legislature and the Regional Houses of Assembly, now that the same persons may not occupy seats in both. Certainly, with the increased powers of the Regions, there would appear to be strong temptation, for the present, for persons of national stature to stay in the Regional Legislatures and Executive Councils, with the possibility of a Regional Premiership, than to run the risks of election to the Federal House, for the possible reward of a ministership in a central Government which has lost a considerable part of its powers to the Regions and in which it appears that no one party will command a majority. Perhaps the most interesting decision to await in this connection will be Azikiwe's - whether he will elect to stand for the new Federal House in the forthcoming elections, or remain in the Eastern House and Government against 1956, when the Constitution is to be again reconsidered and the question of self-government examined. Current rumors have it that the NPC is planning to send a strong representation from the North to the Center, and this may force the other Regions to send stronger representation than they otherwise would.

Erwin P. Keeler
American Consul General

Department please pouch copies to London, Accra, Dakar and Leopoldville.

CONFIDENTIAL